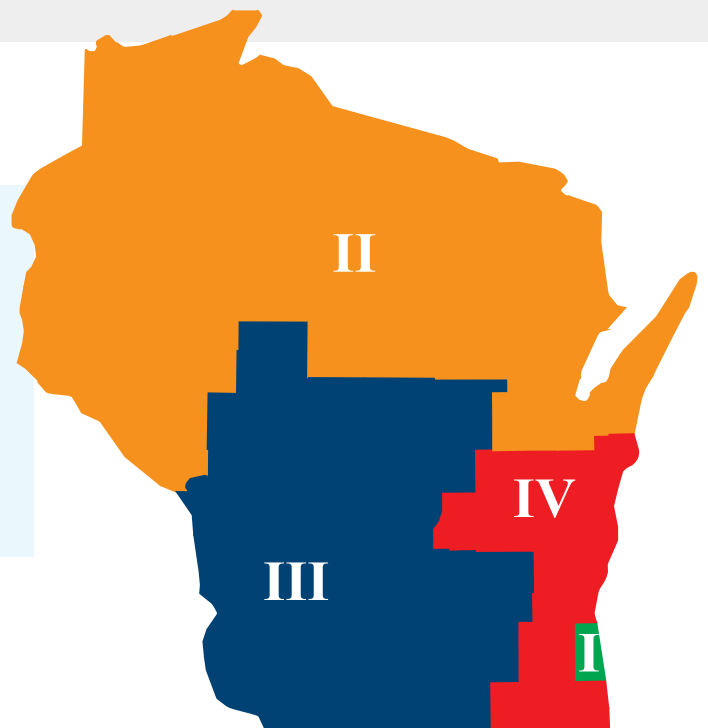


## What is the Wisconsin Court of Appeals?

- Intermediate appellate court: **hears all cases appealed from the circuit courts** (local courts in each county) and rules in favor of one party. Will only overrule circuit court decisions if an important legal error was made.
- Does not decide facts of a case, but rather **makes decisions on whether the law was appropriately applied to the facts**. Facts are determined by the circuit court. The Court of Appeals corrects legal errors in rulings from circuit courts.
- Consists of **16 judges** serving in **four districts**.
- **3-judge panels hear nearly all cases**, but appeals from mental health commitments and protective placements are almost always decided by a single judge. Other cases heard by a single judge include small claims actions, municipal ordinance violations, traffic violations, juvenile, and misdemeanor cases, unless a panel is requested.
- Decisions made by the Court of Appeals **may be appealed** to the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

### The 4 districts of Wisconsin's Appellate Court:

- I. Milwaukee County
- II. Northern Wisconsin
- III. Southwestern Wisconsin
- IV. Southeastern Wisconsin



## What do I need to know about the Judges on the Court of Appeals?

- Judges are chosen in **nonpartisan elections** from their respective districts to serve for **six-year terms**. There are no term limits for judges.
- Judges are elected in April.
- There is no jury and the court does not hear testimony. Judges make decisions based on the evidence presented at the circuit court and written briefs of the case. The Court of Appeals **rarely hears oral arguments**.

## Why does the Court of Appeals matter to voters with disabilities?

- The Court of Appeals hears cases about issues important to people with disabilities such as voting rights, mental health commitments, employee rights, and more.
  - You choose these judges in nonpartisan elections. **Make sure your voice is heard in choosing qualified and fair judges.**
  - If your case was decided unfairly, this is the court that provides important oversight to ensure laws were appropriately followed.
  - **Your rights are at stake.** The Court of Appeals determines binding legal precedent for interpretation of laws unless overruled by the Wisconsin Supreme Court.
-

# HOW DO YOU EVALUATE JUDICIAL CANDIDATES?

## 1. Decide what you are looking for.

- What issues are important to you?
- What qualities do you want in a leader?
- Which candidate's judicial philosophies align with your values?

## 2. Learn about the candidates.

- Visit their websites, watch candidate forums and interviews, go to VOTE411.org, seek other nonpartisan sources for information.
- Review candidate websites, campaign materials, or contact the campaign to ask questions.
- What are their qualifications?
- What are their judicial philosophies?
- What are their records?



## 3. Sort it out.

- Which candidate's judicial philosophies and views on the role of an Appeals Court Judge best match your own views?
- Who seems most prepared for the job?
- Who has the leadership qualities you are looking for?



*The Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition is a project of Disability Rights Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities.*

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